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**FIRST LADY MCCRAY STATEMENT REGARDING PROPOSED STATE BUDGET
CUTS TO DIVERSITY IN MEDICINE PROGRAM**

NEW YORK— First Lady Chirlane McCray today released the following statement regarding proposed New York State funding cuts to Diversity in Medicine Program:

"It is absurd that in the midst of a pandemic, New York state plans to cut funding to a Diversity in Medicine program that aids medical students of color. It was not funded adequately in the first place. We demand that the State not cut, but expand the funding immediately.

As the pandemic exacts a horrific toll on Black and LatinX communities, they are even more in need of doctors who look like them and are attuned to the culture and challenges. Blacks and Hispanics make up approximately 30% of New York's population, but only 12% of the state's physician workforce. It is a legacy that must not continue. Medical students of color deserve more support, not less, and communities of color should have physicians they trust, who understand their culture and speak their language.

Now is the time to fix a systemic inequity that limits medical training for young people and denies the communities hardest hit by Covid-19 the healthcare professionals that could affirm them. It's time to quintuple the funding for Diversity in Medicine so NYS will have the workforce it needs. If not now, when?"

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